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Control Your Weight While Eating Out

EMPLOYED HOMEMAKER



Texas Agricultural Extension Service
The Texas A&M University System
Daniel C. Pfannstiel, Director · College Station, Texas

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Mary K. Sweeten*

Eating Out Trend

The eating out trend is here to stay. Approximately \$61 billion was spent for food eaten away from home in 1978. In 1975, 56 percent of food eaten away from home was eaten in conventional restaurants, lunchrooms and cafeterias, or was catered. Fast food restaurants showed an increase in sales from 10 to 26 percent during a 10-year period. Most employed homemakers and their families regularly eat from one to three meals a week outside the home. People who eat out need to know how to select food wisely to meet nutritional and caloric needs of family members.

Impact of Nutrition

Eating out is not bad, but it does create special problems for people who must control their weight. Selecting lower calorie foods from the Daily Food Guide can be difficult because menu items at many restaurants are limited. Eating a high calorie meal frequently away from home can seriously hamper any weight control program.

Plan for Eating Out

First, determine how often you will be eating out. Reduce your daily calories by 50 to 100 prior to eating out so that one meal away from home will not destroy your weight control program.

Never starve yourself just before eating out because you will probably eat more food than you can afford calorically at the next meal. However, eating a smaller meal before and after the meal that you eat out will help you control calories. Omitting a meal is never recommended because this can cause excessive hunger prior to the next meal, resulting in gorging.

*Extension foods and nutrition specialist, The Texas A&M University System.

Wise Restaurant Selection

Select a restaurant that allows some choice of low calorie foods so that your weight control effort will be effective. Restaurants which feature crisp salads and grilled or broiled meats are a better choice than those which feature rich desserts, French pastries or foods prepared with rich gravies or wine sauces.

Limited menu restaurants serving only pizzas, tacos, fried chicken, hamburgers or french fries should be avoided. If you do eat these foods, select the small burger without french fried potatoes and milk shakes. Thin crust pizzas are lower in calories than thick crust ones.

Buffets, tea rooms or smorgasbords are usually arranged so that you see the salads and lower calorie foods first. Select lower calorie items and more leafy salads. Avoid desserts the first time through the line because it is easier to resist them on a full stomach.

When eating in a cafeteria, review the menu and plan your meal so that you are not just taking items as you go down the line. Select only lower calorie foods.

Menu Selection

Read your menu carefully, noting the way foods are prepared and asking the waitress if you have any questions about the various foods. When eating out, select the lower calorie foods from the Basic Food Groups as shown in Extension publication L-1453 *Be Wise—Control Your Weight*. A part of any weight control program is learning how to select foods without excess calories. Ordering a la carte helps control what you actually eat because side dishes are eliminated.

Wise, lower calorie selections from the "appetizer" list include tomato juice, grapefruit juice or sections, clear broth or vegetable soup or a fresh fruit cup. Avoid selecting creamed soups or creamed fish. Drink diet colas or vegetable or fruit juices instead of high calorie alcoholic beverages.

Select "entree" or main dish items carefully. Choose roasted, baked, broiled or grilled meats without rich sauces, gravies or breading according to the number of ounces that you need to supply your daily meat group requirement. Most menus will tell the number of ounces of steaks or chops, but not poultry or fish. A 3- to 4-ounce serving of meat is probably a good choice for most people on a

weight control program. Meat group foods provide a high amount of nutrients per ounce. This makes them an important part of any weight control program because it may be difficult to provide necessary nutrients when calorie needs are minimal. Trim off visible fat on meat or skin on poultry before eating it.

If your entree comes with vegetables, ask for them to be prepared with no cheese, cream sauce or almonds. If you select a baked potato, use only one pat of butter or 1 tablespoon of sour cream. Each serving of fat adds about 50 extra calories. One tablespoon of mayonnaise-based salad dressing also adds 50 calories. Eat crisp, green salads with oil and vinegar dressings or a lemon wedge to eliminate extra calories. If you select fruit salads, turn down added sauces. Ask the waitress to drain the syrup off canned fruit.

Avoid overeating bread. Many restaurants specialize in freshly prepared hot bread which may be a great temptation. Ask the waitress to remove the bread from the table after you have eaten your allowed serving. In Spanish restaurants, you may ask that the taco chips be removed after eating a few, or ask the waitress not to serve them at all if you cannot resist the temptation of overeating. One 6-inch tortilla has calories equal to one slice of bread (75).

Select only low calorie desserts such as fresh fruit cup, fruit sherbet, or fruited gelatin. Omit whipped topping. Avoid the dessert if possible.

Beverages with fewer calories include skim milk or skim buttermilk, diet colas, coffee or tea. Avoid using cream or sugar to flavor coffee or tea; substitute a dietetic sweetener if desired.

Stop eating when full and when you have eaten your allotted calories. Then ask the waitress to remove your plate and the remaining food from the table.

When conducting a business luncheon, reduce the time spent eating. Possibly order a smaller amount of food than usual.

Eating Out - A Way of Life

Eating out is a way of life in America and advanced meal planning is essential for the employed homemaker or for others who eat out. Remember to plan family meals according to the Daily Food Guide when eating at home or at a restaurant to insure that all family members eat the recommended servings from the bread-cereal group, fruit-vegetable group, milk, meat and other groups. If weight control is a problem, follow the suggestions in this pamphlet when eating out.



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